



# BUFFALOBERRY PATCH

BY GREG FREEMAN, DEPARTMENT NEWS EDITOR

## WATCHABLE WILDLIFE PHOTO CONTEST

The Game and Fish Department's 15th annual Watchable Wildlife Photo Contest is ready for entries.

The contest encompasses all North Dakota wildlife in a variety of categories – nongame species, game species, insects and plants.

The winner in the nongame category – only animals not hunted, fished or trapped – will appear on the Department's 2006 Watchable Wildlife program promotional poster.

The photographer submitting the poster winner receives five rolls of film, while runners-up in each category receive three rolls of film. Each of the prize-winning photographs will appear in North Dakota OUTDOORS.

The image selected for the poster will be selected from entries that are original, vertical-composition transparencies (slides), or vertical digital originals taken with cameras with maximum resolution capability of 6.0 megapixels or higher. Prints, slides and digital photos are all acceptable formats for entries in each category.

Deadline for submitting photos is September 30.

### PHOTO CONTEST RULES

#### Eligibility

The contest is open to both amateur and professional photographers. North Dakota Game and Fish Department employees and their immediate family members are not eligible. Photographs must be taken in North Dakota.

#### How and where to enter

The contest is limited to 35mm slides or larger format transparencies, or 5x7-inch or larger color prints in either vertical or horizontal composition. Prints made from unaltered digital files are accepted. Photographers are limited to no more than five entries each. The overall winner must be in vertical format for use on the promotional poster.

The Game and Fish Department reserves the right to copy and print winners to promote the Watchable Wildlife program. By submitting an entry, photographers grant permission to Game and Fish to publish winning photographs in its magazine, North Dakota OUTDOORS, and also as part of the magazine on the Department's web page, [discovernd.com/gnf/](http://discovernd.com/gnf/). Appropriate credit will be given in any publication where such photos are used.

If a print made from a digital file is selected, the photographer must provide the original file for publication purposes.

All entries should be sent to: Watchable Wildlife Photo Contest, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, 100 N. Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501-5095.

Nonwinning entries will be returned following contest judging.

#### Photo requirements

Slides, transparencies or prints must be accompanied by the photographer's name, address and phone number. Other information such as photo site location and month taken, equipment used, film speed and type, and lens/aperture settings would be useful.

Although care will be taken with submitted material, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department assumes no financial responsibility for lost or damaged materials.

#### Deadline

Entries will be accepted through September 30. Judging will take place in October, with winners notified by November 30. Receipt of entries will not be acknowledged.

#### Judging

Photos are judged on quality, composition, content and general appeal.

Please respect private lands by obtaining permission and be sure to use proper wildlife-watching ethics while photographing.

## BOW Workshop in August

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has a weekend set aside specifically for women who enjoy an outdoor adventure.

Applications are being accepted for the 11th annual Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Workshop August 19-21 at Lake Metigoshe State Park, Bottineau. The cost is \$120 with an August 1 registration deadline. Enrollment is limited to 100 participants.

The workshop is directed at women, ages 18 or older, who want to learn more about outdoor activities, according to Nancy Boldt, BOW program director for the Department.

The weekend offers 27 different seminars, each lasting more than three hours. Classes are held outdoors, and each session contains 45 minutes of lecture with the remainder dedicated to hands-on instruction. "Each session has room for 12 women," Boldt said, "so each person gets a lot of help and technical assistance."

Participants are limited to four sessions. New classes offered this workshop include birds and their nests, beginning bowhunting, big game 101 and introduction to rifles.

Participants can also choose from mainstays such as fishing and fly-fishing classes, bird identification, plant identification, canoeing, predator calling, decoy carving, GPS adventure, archery, handling and cooking game, shotgunning and black powder.

Participants will stay in dorms and must provide their own bedding and towels. All camp facilities are handicap accessible. Equipment will be provided unless noted in course description.

To receive a brochure and enrollment form, contact Nancy Boldt, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, 100 N. Bismarck Expressway, Bismarck, ND 58501-5095 or call 701-328-6312, email: [nboldt@state.nd.us](mailto:nboldt@state.nd.us), or visit the Game and Fish website at [discovernd.com/gnf/](http://discovernd.com/gnf/).

Workshop sponsors include North Dakota Parks and Recreation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.



*Samples for chronic wasting disease taken from North Dakota deer were sent to Wyoming for testing.*

## CWD Test Results Negative

Officials from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department continue to receive good news from scientists conducting tests for chronic wasting disease.

Test results for CWD on more than 1,900 wild deer and 26 elk collected from hunters during the 2004 hunting season are negative, according to Greg Link, Department assistant wildlife chief.

Samples for testing were sent to the Wyoming State Veterinary Lab last December, and the Department got the results back in early May. "This is good news," Link said. "However, continued vigilance is the key to managing this disease and we won't be letting our guard down. We're already in the process of setting up next hunting season's sampling effort."

Samples from hunter-harvested deer were taken from animals last fall in six of the state's eight CWD surveillance units. The six units cover most of North Dakota, except for a couple of units in the southeast where sampling in previous years achieved the statistical quota. "The efforts from hunters, fur buyers, meat processors, our staff and other agencies have been tremendous," Link said.

"We're very appreciative of their cooperation and assistance."

The goal of the Hunter-Harvested Surveillance program is to obtain a statistically significant sample (458 animals) in each surveillance unit within a two-year period, Link said. "Over the last three years, the entire state has been sampled," he added. "In all but one surveillance unit in northeastern North Dakota, we've obtained and tested enough samples to say with a high degree of confidence that CWD is likely not present."

Since 2002, more than 4,000 deer and 80 elk have tested negative for CWD. To date, it has not been diagnosed in wild or farmed deer or elk in North Dakota.

"We will continue to be aggressive in our monitoring efforts and support for CWD research," Link said, while noting the Department will continue to monitor and collect suspect deer and elk, including road-killed animals, throughout the year.

Chronic wasting disease affects the nervous system of white-tailed deer, mule deer and elk and is always fatal. Scientists have found no evidence that CWD can be transmitted naturally to humans or livestock.

## Crews Get Eggs Despite Weather

Fisheries crews collected 16 million northern pike and 48 million walleye eggs during spring spawning operations.

"We met our goal, but it was one of our longest seasons because of the weather," said Jerry Weigel, fisheries production and development section leader for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department said. "The walleye spawn was especially difficult because of cold, windy days."

The weather did cooperate for the pike spawn, which occurred relatively fast during warm days in early April. "Eggs were equally split between Lake Ashtabula and Devils Lake," Weigel said, "and the quality was good."

After hatching, fry were stocked in hatchery production ponds, and were distributed as fingerlings to waters around the state in May.

Even though fisheries crews surpassed their goal by collecting 48 million walleye eggs, weather conditions from late April to mid-May didn't make it easy. "It was not a good run because of poor weather," Weigel said. "There was never a calm day. Our crews were constantly fighting cold temperatures and windy conditions."

Crews were able to take 27 million eggs from Lake Sakakawea and 21 million from Devils Lake. "Working conditions led to few eggs, which is why we had to be out there almost a month to achieve our goal," Weigel said. "Water temperatures dropped more than 10 degrees in a week, and when you have a water temperature of 39 degrees the first week in May, it really works against the walleye spawn."

Despite the weather, fisheries crews were able to come to the aid of another state by taking extra eggs. "Pennsylvania put out a request for help because they had a difficult year and couldn't meet their stocking needs," Weigel said. "They have been such a great partner, providing us with fingerling tiger muskie for a number of years."

It's not unusual for other states to put in a call to North Dakota for help, Weigel said. "We are the last of the lower 48 states to take walleye eggs," he said. "We have developed good relationships with other states. The help goes both ways."

## NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS Live!

With Radio Host Doug Leier, Game and Fish Outreach Biologist  
**Saturdays at 11 a.m.** (10 a.m. mountain time)  
on the following North Dakota Clear Channel radio network stations:

KFGO-AM 790, Fargo  
KKXL-AM 1440, Grand Forks • KCJB-AM 910, Minot  
KLTC-AM 1460, Dickinson • KFYR-AM 550, Bismarck

*Join Doug and guests for news and conversation that embraces everyone with an interest in North Dakota's Outdoors.*

## Pronghorn Applications Due in August

Pronghorn applications will be available in mid-July, and the deadline for applying is August 10.

Prospective hunters are encouraged to apply on the Game and Fish Department's website at [discovernd.com/gnf](http://discovernd.com/gnf). The website also contains application forms that can be printed and mailed. Regular license fees apply and no service charge is added.

Applications will be available at Game and Fish offices, county auditors and license vendors.

Applications are also accepted at the Department's toll-free licensing line at 800-406-6409. A service fee is added for license applications made over the phone.

Only North Dakota residents are eligible for pronghorn gun licenses.



## 2004 Pronghorn Season Report

Pronghorn hunters had a successful 2004 hunting season, according to data compiled by the Game and Fish Department biologists.

Last fall, 2,272 rifle hunters harvested 1,865 pronghorns, an 82 percent success rate. Hunters harvested 1,361 bucks and 504 does.

Pronghorn hunters spent an average of two days in the field last fall. Seventeen gun hunting units were open.

A total of 1,331 archery hunters tagged 213 pronghorns, a 16 percent success rate.

## Agency Receives Funds for Wildlife Conservation

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department has received \$6.7 million for 2005 from excise taxes paid by America's recreational shooters, hunters, anglers and boaters. Altogether, 56 state and territorial fish and wildlife agencies shared more than \$530 million.

The funding will be used by the Department to support conservation programs such as fish and wildlife monitoring, habitat improvement, land acquisition for habitat conservation and species protection, research, education, and other programs. The money will also help pay for hunter safety, aquatic education, and fish and wildlife-related recreation projects. The funds are apportioned by a formula under two federal assistance programs: Wildlife Restoration and Sport Fish Restoration. Federal assistance funds pay up to 75 percent of the cost of each project while states contribute at least 25 percent.

Hunters and anglers might not realize their important role, as excise taxes generated from the sale of hunting and fishing equipment – firearms, ammunition and fishing rods included – fund these programs, said Dean Hildebrand, Game and Fish Director. "The funding provided by those who hunt and fish protects our resources," he said. "This ensures that future generations can experience the wonders of fishing and hunting many of us have taken for granted. Habitat creation and protection provides the foundation for all things wild and free. We can't make this happen without the help of those who use our precious natural resources."

The total 2005 Wildlife Restoration apportionment for all state and territorial agencies is more than \$235 million, with more than \$46

## Franklin's Ground Squirrels are Eastern ND Residents

Our June back-page feature on Franklin's ground squirrels contained an undetected typographical error that indicates these secretive ground dwellers live north and west of the Missouri River in North Dakota, when they actually live north and east of the Missouri. Our thanks to several readers who recognized the error so we could provide an update to the story.

## Summary of 2004 Swan Season

Swan hunters during North Dakota's 2004 season bagged 719 birds, up from 235 in 2003, according to Mike Szymanski, migratory game bird biologist for the Game and Fish Department.

Last year's total is above the average annual swan harvest of 636 birds. The highest number of swans taken was 870 in 1997, compared to a low of 191 birds in 1988.

While the Game and Fish Department allocates 2,200 licenses, only 2,061 were issued last year. An estimated 1,564 hunters actually participated – 902 were residents and 662 were from out-of-state. The average number of days afield was four days per hunter. Hunter success was 46 percent.

The five counties with the highest number of swans taken were McLean, Pierce, Divide, McHenry and Burleigh.

million dedicated to hunter education and shooting range programs. Sport fish restoration support for 2005 totals nearly \$295 million.

Wildlife Restoration funds are made available to states based on land area (land plus inland waters, such as lakes and large rivers) and the number of hunting license holders in each state. Distribution of hunter education funds is based on the relative population of each state. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service distributes Sport Fish Restoration funds to the states based on the land and water area (land plus inland water, plus the Great Lakes and marine coastal areas) and the number of fishing license holders in each state.

Wildlife Restoration is guided by the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937 and is funded by collection of excise taxes and import duties on firearms, ammunition and archery equipment. States use Wildlife Restoration Program funds to manage wildlife populations and habitat; conduct research, surveys and inventories; and to administer hunter education programs.

Sport Fish Restoration is guided by the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act of 1950 and is funded by collection of excise taxes and import duties on fishing equipment and tackle, trolling motors, motorboat and small engine fuels, and pleasure boats. States use Sport Fish Restoration Program funds to stock fish; acquire and improve sport fish habitat; provide aquatic resource education opportunities; conduct fisheries research; and build boat ramps, fishing piers and other facilities necessary to provide recreational boating access.



## Spring Mule Deer Survey Complete

Western North Dakota's mule deer population has increased slightly for the third consecutive year, based on observations during the Game and Fish Department's annual spring mule deer survey.

Biologists counted 2,883 mule deer in 24 study areas, according to Bruce Stillings, Department big game biologist, Dickinson. Density of mule deer per square mile was 9.9, up from 8.4 in 2004. The density of mule deer in 2005 was also higher than the long-term average of six mule deer per square mile.

Biologists surveyed 291 square miles during the spring count. The 2005 spring mule deer index is reflective of last year's good production, a mild winter in mule deer territory, and a conservative, yet responsible harvest strategy, Stillings said.



## GAME & FISH STAFF NOTES

### PLI Positions Filled

Ty Dressler and John Bauer were hired as private land biologists June 1.

Dressler, formerly a habitat specialist with Pheasants Forever, works out of the district office in Dickinson. The position opened after Nathaniel Umphrey transferred to the Jamestown district office.

Dressler, a native of Richardton, is a graduate of North Dakota State University with a degree in natural resources management.

Bauer, previously a technician for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the Kulm Wetland Management District, is stationed in Riverdale. He filled the position that opened after Jeff Long transferred to Bismarck as education coordinator.

Bauer, originally from Wishek, has a degree in zoology from North Dakota State University.



*Ty Dressler*



*John Bauer*

## Rise in Spring Sage Grouse Numbers

North Dakota Game and Fish Department biologists completed the 2005 sage grouse survey, with census data showing an increase in the number of strutting male sage grouse observed compared to last year.

Biologists counted 225 males this spring, up from 144 in 2004. The all-time high number of male sage grouse counted on leks in the southwest was 542 birds in 1953, compared to a low of 111 birds in 1996.

The survey was conducted on 15 active strutting grounds, compared to 19 last year. "The poor weather this year was probably the reason we were unable to locate some of the small grounds," said Jerry Kobriger, Department upland game management supervisor, Dickinson.

North Dakota's sage grouse season had typically opened the Monday after the sharp-tailed grouse opener in early to mid-September. In 2004, the sage grouse season was moved to a later date in September to reduce the amount of hunting pressure on adult females. Harvest records indicate the later the season, the less hunting mortality occurs on adult females. No specific dates for this fall's sage grouse season have been set.

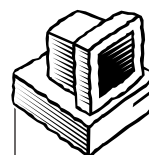
Sage grouse are North Dakota's largest native upland game bird. They are found in extreme southwestern North Dakota, in Bowman and Slope counties.

## NORTH DAKOTA OUTDOORS ON TELEVISION

### Your Weekly Window on the WILD

Bismarck	KFYR	Tuesday	10 pm
Bismarck	KXMB	Sunday	10 pm
Bismarck	CATV	Saturday	Noon
Dickinson	KQCD	Tuesday	*9 pm
Dickinson	KXMA	Sunday	*9 pm
Fargo	KVRR	Sunday	9 pm
Grand Forks	WDAZ	Wednesday	5 pm
Minot	KMOT	Tuesday	10 pm
Minot	KXMC	Monday	Noon
Williston	KUMV	Tuesday	10 pm
Williston	KXMD	Monday	Noon

\*Mountain time



## INSTANT LICENSING

Online at

[www.discovernd.com/gnf/](http://www.discovernd.com/gnf/)  
Over the phone at **800-406-6409**

Most types of Game and Fish licenses and applications are now available both online at the Department's website, or over the phone. Online license purchases have no surcharge, while instant licensing over the phone carries a service charge of \$4 for transactions of \$70 or less, and \$10 if the cost is more than \$70.

